



THE INDYPENDENT

THE NEW YORK CITY INDEPENDENT MEDIA CENTER

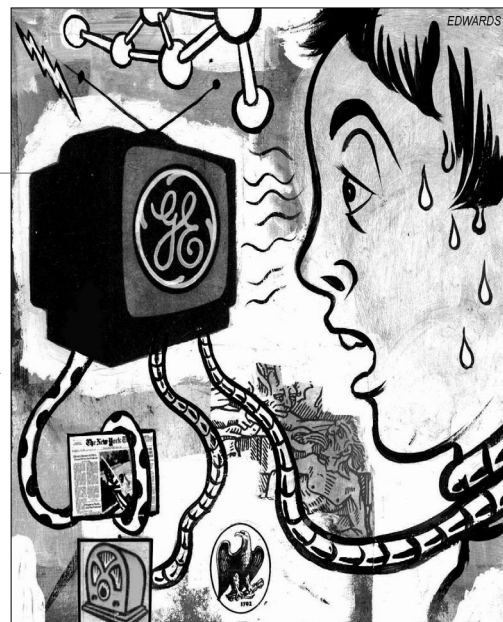
ISSUE #32

JUNE 4-17, 2003

ILL COMMUNICATION

FCC REMOVES TAINT OF MEDIA DIVERSITY

BY F. TIMOTHY MARTIN



On June 2 the Federal Communications Commission held a much-anticipated hearing to decide the fate of broadcast ownership rules.

The outcome of their vote offered little surprise.

Split 3-2 along party lines, the FCC voted to loosen longstanding media ownership regulations.

Opponents of media deregulation fear that the relaxation of broadcast rules will lead to further consolidation of media ownership at the expense of local and diverse news coverage.

According to a statement released immediately after the hearing by Democratic commissioner Michael Copps, the rule changes, kept secret from the public

until the hearing, will now enable:

- **National concentration:** A national television network will be able to acquire dozens of local broadcaster stations and control up to 90 percent of the national television market;
- **Local concentration:** A single corporation will be able to acquire, in one city, up to three television stations, eight radio stations, the cable TV system, numerous cable TV stations, and the only daily newspaper.
- As it stands today six major companies control most of the media in our country. Even without the current rule changes it's easy to see how the media is controlled by an increasingly fewer number of corporations.
- **Television:** A recent study by *The Economist* found that the five networks and top ten cable channels make up 90 percent of what U.S. viewers watch.
- **Cable:** According to the Center for Public Integrity, AOL Time Warner, Viacom (CBS) and Walt Disney (ABC) control 12 of the top 20 cable networks. Since the Telecom Act of 1996 cable rates have jumped 40 percent.
- **Internet:** More than 35 million people log on to the Internet using AOL as their service provider. That's opposed to 10 million for MSN, its nearest competitor. Moreover, top Internet news sites are increasingly dominated by the same corporations in control of other news outlets.
- **Radio:** Sixty percent of top radio stations are owned by Clear Channel Communications or one of two other corporations.

Ignoring Public Interest

In late May the Center for Public Integrity published a scathing report that said FCC commissioners received \$2.8 million in travel and entertainment gifts from the very

industries the agency regulates. In the past eight years commissioners were treated to a total of 2,500 privately funded trips, with Las Vegas and New Orleans being the most popular destinations. Chairman Michael Powell was the biggest recipient of this largesse, racking up 44 trips at an expense of \$84,921.

Perhaps as a result, Powell's FCC has blatantly favored private interests over those of the public. Industry leaders including Rupert Murdoch, CEO of News Corporation – one of the world's biggest media conglomerates with control over FOX News, the *New York Post*, and many other media outlets – have had more than 70 private meetings with FCC commissioners.

By contrast, Powell offered the public only one official hearing after much public pressure to allow civic groups and concerned individuals to express their views. The FCC's two Democratic commissioners organized several unofficial hearings, but Powell and the two other Republican commissioners shunned their efforts.

FOX News has come under heavy fire for its blatant bias in news coverage, particularly during the recent war on Iraq. While millions of anti-war protesters converged around the world FOX ignored them in favor of reporting on the handful of small pro-war demonstrations also taking place, most of which were heavily promoted by Clear Channel.

Around the same time, FOX News further displayed its partisanship when one of its news anchors, Neil Cavuto, was quoted as saying shortly after the fall of Baghdad that "those who opposed the liberation of Iraq...you were sickening then; you are sickening now."

FOX's star-spangled coverage propelled it into first place among the all-news channels, but few Americans are enthused by the possibility of all FOX, all the time.

A recent CNN poll said 96 percent of respondents believed there was already too much consolidation in the media.

Add in the more than 700,000 public comments sent to the FCC in recent months, 99.9 percent of which voiced opposition to the rule changes, and it's not surprising that Powell and pals weren't anxious to stand up in front of any additional public hearings. In the face of such adversity who wouldn't rather take off for Vegas instead?

The Clear Channel Effect

While leaving rules for other media largely intact, The Telecom Act of 1996 lifted ownership caps for radio. Since then, Clear Channel Communications has gobbled up over 1,400 stations in what most everyone agrees is an excessive share of the market.

In a recent Senate hearing investigating the radio giant, members of the Senate voiced their concerns.

"When you pump in homogenized programming, isn't that troubling in terms of localism?" asked Sen. Byron Dorgan (D-N.D.), who keeps an office in the town of Minot where Clear Channel owns all 6 commercial radio stations.

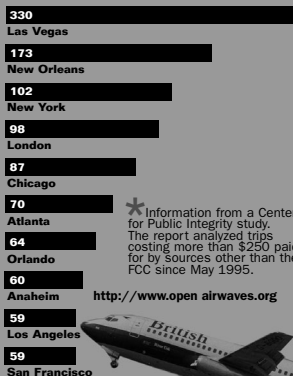
The senator knows that is not only troubling, it can be deadly.

In January, 2002, when a train derailment released poisonous gas into the air of Minot, no one could reach any of the local radio stations to announce the news. The station offices were all locked and empty as they broadcast canned programming from a Clear Channel clearinghouse. One person died and over 300 were sent to the hospital.

Copps has been vocal about the consequences of eliminating ownership rules for radio. "The consolidation went far beyond what anyone expected," he said during a speech at Columbia University.

ROAMING FOR PROFIT

Since May 1995, FCC staffers have taken a total of 2,500 industry-sponsored trips to destinations including Paris, Hong Kong and Rio de Janeiro.



*Information from a Center for Public Integrity study. The report analyzed trips costing more than \$250 paid for by sources other than the FCC since May 1995.

<http://www.openairwaves.org>



continued on page 4



new york city independent media center

Email:

imc-nyc-print@indymedia.org

Phone: 212.684.8112

Web:

NYC: www.nyc.indymedia.org

GLOBAL: www.indymedia.org

Office and Mail:

NYC Independent Media Center

34 E. 29th St. 2nd Floor

NY, NY 10016

What is the IMC?

With autonomous chapters in more than 100 cities throughout the world, the Independent Media Center is an international network of volunteer media activists.

The IMC seeks to create a new media ethic by providing progressive, in-depth and accurate coverage of issues. We are a community-based organization using media to facilitate political and cultural self-representation. We seek to illuminate and analyze issues impacting individuals, communities and ecosystems by providing media tools and space to those seeking to communicate.

We espouse open dialogue and placing the means of communication and creativity back in the hands of the people, away from the drive of profit.

The Independent is funded by benefits, subscriptions, donations, grants and ads from organizations and individuals with similar missions.

What can I do to get involved?

The IMC has an open door. You can write for *The Independent*, film events and rallies, self-publish articles to the web, take photos or just help us run the office. As an organization relying entirely on volunteer support, we encourage all forms of participation.

The print team reserves the right to edit articles for length, content and clarity. We welcome your participation in the entire editorial process.

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RENTERS FACE EVICTION

PHIPPS PLAZA WEST RESIDENTS FACE SOARING RENTS AS DEVELOPERS BUY OUT HOUSING COMPLEX



HOUSING CRISIS: (clockwise from top left) Sylvia Mendel, Beth Royer, and Carol LaVerne fear they may lose their homes. More than 30 percent of the tenants at Phipps Plaza West are over 60 years old, a disproportionate number of them being women. PHOTO: Lina Pallotta

BY JOHN TARLETON

Beth Royer lies awake on many nights wondering whether she will lose her \$430-a-month studio apartment at Phipps Plaza West on 27th St. and 2nd Ave. Carol LaVerne doesn't know what to do if management succeeds in jacking up her rent up from \$768 to \$1,700 per month. Sylvia Mendel has a recurring nightmare in which she wakes up in her bed to the sounds of moving men carting away her possessions. She protests, but is invisible to them.

While Phipps Plaza West's roughly 2,500 working- and middle-class residents anxiously wonder what will happen next as investors seek to buy out their Mitchell-Lama development and begin charging full market rates, older women like Royer, LaVerne and Mendel who live alone face an especially uncertain future as New York's affordable housing crisis deepens. More than 30 percent of the tenants at Phipps Plaza West are over 60 years old, a disproportionate number of them being widows or divorcees who only began earning good money later in life.

"Women in my position are always at risk of homelessness," says Mendel, 73, President of the Phipps Plaza West Tenants Association.

Launched in 1955, the Mitchell-Lama program (named for former State Senator MacNeil Mitchell of Manhattan and former Assemblyman Alfred Lama of Brooklyn) led to the construction of 269 developments with over 105,000 apartments in the state of New York, the great majority here in the city.

Under Mitchell-Lama, the state or municipality provided low-interest loans to developers that covered as much as 95 percent of building costs, along with tax abatements and in some cases free land. In return, developers accepted limits on their profits—for a while. Through a provision of the 1961 Private Housing Finance Law, developers can buy out a building's mortgage after 20 years and assume full control of its operations. Housing stock built after January 1, 1974 (like Phipps Plaza

West) also becomes exempt from rent stabilization laws.

"It's a huge scandal," says Neil Fabricant, President of the Independence Plaza Tenants Association in Tribeca, "to have billions of dollars in taxpayer money invested in the most successful public housing program in the history of the country and take that and allow a handful of political hustlers to keep all the money and kick people out of their homes."

Many Mitchell-Lama developments were built to entice middle class people to move into rundown parts of the city. There were no grocery stores or theatres nearby when LaVerne moved into Phipps Plaza West upon its opening in 1976. Instead, there was a methadone clinic across the street, and the smells of urine and dog shit regularly wafted up to LaVerne's 20th floor terrace. "There were drug addicts all over the place," she says. "You couldn't walk down 28th St. without people trying to sell you drugs."

Phipps Plaza West's eight high-rise buildings contain 894 housing units. Longtime neighbors know each other on a first-name basis. Both children and senior citizens have access to arts and crafts programs. The community room that hosts tenant meetings is also the site of holiday pageants and storytelling sessions.

"It's like a small town in the middle of the big city," says one longtime resident who is a children's television scriptwriter. "It's different than living in a tenement across the street where you're anonymous and there is no community."

Mitchell-Lama rents are calibrated according to income, and residents have the luxury of knowing that temporarily losing their job doesn't also have to mean losing their home. However, many Mitchell-Lama residents (including Fabricant, who once served as counsel to former State Senate Majority Leader Earl Brydges) say that they were unaware of the buyout clause and its implications.

Phipps Plaza West's 65 limited partners announced their intention to buy out in January 2002. The Tenants Association responded with a lawsuit that has delayed

“It's a huge scandal to have billions of dollars in taxpayer money invested in the most successful public housing program in the history of the country and take that and allow a handful of political hustlers to keep all the money and kick people out of their homes.”

but not reversed the buyout. The limited partners could get the final green light to buy out later this month. Management fixed a May 30 deadline for individual tenants to renew their leases after the development was removed from the Mitchell-Lama program. The Tenants Association's legal team initially urged residents not to renew while the case was being litigated but subsequently reversed itself.

The federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has offered Section 8 "sticky" vouchers to about 600 low-income residents to help cover the rent hike. For Royer, who gets by on a \$650-a-month Social Security check, the voucher is little consolation since it can be rescinded at any time in the future. Also, the Section 8 program itself may soon be terminated (see "In Brief," page 3) by the Bush administration. Other residents, like LaVerne, who earns just above the maximum income threshold, will receive no assistance.

Faced with losing their homes, LaVerne, Mendel and Royer are looking to politicians for help. On May 13 they joined a couple thousand tenants rights activists in Albany to lobby the Legislature. They managed to obtain a meeting with an aide to State Senate Majority Leader Joe Bruno (R-Rensselaer) but their concerns were politely dismissed.

Says LaVerne, "We heard the attitude loud and clear: 'We don't want to do anything to offend the landlords.' It was like, 'You had 20 good years, what is there to complain about?'"

With Mitchell-Lama developments gradually being privatized, some of their tenants association presidents have recently begun meeting to plot a common strategy. On June 25, they will hold a protest at City Hall to put pressure on Mayor Michael Bloomberg, who they believe should be making more of an effort to persuade local developers and state leaders in Albany to preserve the Mitchell-Lama program.

"This is a part of a larger issue which is should housing be left to the market?" Mendel says. "They say the market will 'correct itself,' but what does that mean for people like me?"



DEATH BY A THOUSAND CUTS

SUICIDE HELP LINE VICTIM OF BUDGET CRISIS

BY SASHA NEVSKAYA

"The city is shooting itself in the face with this cut," Councilwoman Margarita Lopez warned at a May 15 hearing of the city council's Mental Health Committee. She was referring to plans to axe funding for the Samaritans, New York City's only suicide prevention hotline.

The city's Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH), which has loyally supported the Samaritans for over a decade, is now considering eliminating \$171,000 in funding for the hotline. The cut would reduce The Samaritans' total budget by 75 percent. DOHMH itself has been negatively impacted by a proposed \$52 million cut, and is eliminating jobs and restructuring programs all over the city in response.

"Suicide is a blind spot on the national health agenda," says a Samaritans spokesperson who asked to remain anonymous. She says that most people are unaware that suicide causes more deaths in the United States annually than homicide or AIDS. She adds that because suicide prevention is not a trendy cause, it receives much less funding from corporations and foundations than other public health issues.

Started in the parish of British chaplain Chad Varah in 1953, the Samaritans has grown to be one of the world's largest volunteer organizations, providing nondenominational, around-the-clock service to those in distress.

In 1983 Mary Buser organized the New York branch with no more than a \$2,000 grant, some donations and the energy of fellow volunteers. After struggling to maintain its existence through the 1980s, the New York hotline finally received a United Way grant in 1990 as well as support from DOHMH. It was soon transformed from a daytime-only operation in a cramped space in a Hell's Kitchen church to a 24-hour, confidential crisis-intervention service with more than 100 volunteers.

The Samaritans are now stuck in the middle of the city's mental health services crisis. The mental hygiene sector of DOHMH has been greatly affected by the recent settlement of a class-action lawsuit that requires the department to provide mental health services to people released from the city's corrections

facilities. The city will take \$1.7 million from the department this year to pay the settlement and provide the services. Dr. Lloyd I. Sederer, Executive Deputy Commissioner of DOHMH, states that this diversion of funds will cause several programs to be shut down along with two children's mental health clinics — one in Harlem and one in the Bronx.

DOHMH is also planning to save money by scaling back the New York Housing program, which provides housing for the mentally ill. "Probably the most acute need in the sector of mental hygiene is for housing," says David Bergman of the Coalition of Voluntary Mental Health Agencies. Bergman notes that DOHMH provides few direct mental health services, but rather contracts with other organizations, most of them nonprofit or volunteer agencies such as the Samaritans.

DOHMH is rationalizing its proposed funding cuts by arguing that the suicide hotline calls will be absorbed by mental health professionals at Lifenet, the Project Liberty hotline and referral service that has been widely advertised since 9/11. But Lifenet does not provide the same immediate emotional support services, and in fact refers many calls to the Samaritans.

Samaritans volunteers operate on a principle of "befriending" — a concept of compassionate and comforting listening. They go through five months of intensive training. "There are huge advantages in employing every day people for the hotline — they are proficient in human compassion and [the] ability to bear witness to somebody else's pain," says Buser.

The Samaritans receive around 37,000 calls a year, the majority of which come from callers who have already contacted other agencies and are getting professional help. The group occupies a unique niche providing a 24-hour safety net for people in crisis.

The Samaritans have received support from several council members in addition to Lopez, who chairs the Mental Health Committee. Lopez and Samaritans volunteers argue that in these times of mass layoffs and shrinking social services, cutting funding for what is often the community's last resort for desperate people would be dangerous. Unfortunately, the suicide hotline may well be struggling for its own life after the city makes its final budget decisions this month.

The author is currently a volunteer at the Samaritans.

WHEN BUSH COMES TO SHOVE... WHERE DO YOU TURN FOR NEWS?

Naomi Klein says *The Independent* "mixes the spirit of direct action with a searing critique of corporate power." Drawing upon the global network of Indymedia Centers, we let people speak for themselves — from the streets of Baghdad to the jungles of Colombia, the shantytowns of South Africa to the villages of East Timor. We look at those resisting the Pentagon and Wall Street reign of terror, from the fight at home for housing, quality education and civil liberties to the broader struggle against corporate globalization. Don't miss an issue—subscribe today!

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IN BRIEF

ST. LOUIS BLUES: POLICE CRACKDOWN

Police and federal agents in St. Louis, MO raided a housing collective and a community center home to progressive organizations, including the St. Louis IMC, during the World Agricultural Forum last month.

The authorities arrested 18 people, confiscated equipment and supplies, and condemned and immediately boarded up the housing collective building.

On the same day, police arrested nine bicyclists for "biking without a license." The raids and arrests occurred on the opening day of the three-day Forum, sponsored by agribusiness giants Monsanto and Cargill.

Many of the arrestees were organizers of or participants in Biodevastation 7, a counter-conference held in opposition to the Forum.

BIKERS TURN OUT FOR CRITICAL MASS

Hundreds of bicycle riders rode through the streets of Manhattan on May 31 in one of the largest recent gatherings of Critical Mass.

The ride benefited the More Gardens! Coalition, a local group dedicated to preserving community gardens throughout New York City.

Riders began at Union Square and headed toward Columbus Circle before returning to the Lower East Side for a garden tour and benefit party.

Critical Mass rides the last Friday of each month in 325 cities on 6 continents. The next New York ride, on June 27, will kick off BikeSummer 2003, a month-long celebration promoting the vision of a more bike-friendly world.

JAZZ CLUB SILENCED

Jazz lovers savored the music one last time at Smalls on May 31, as the West Village music mecca closed its doors. The basement club opened in 1994, catering to up-and-coming artists and a relaxed jazz audience. Owner Mitchell Borden says higher rent is forcing him to move on.

TENANTS HIT THE STREETS TO OPPOSE RENT HIKES

About 200 tenants marched on June 1 in Manhattan in opposition to the sharp hikes proposed last month for rent stabilized apartments.

In a preliminary vote, the Rent Guidelines Board proposed a 5.5 percent increase on one-year leases and an 8.5 percent hike on two-year leases for New York City's one million rent stabilized apartments. If approved in a final vote later this month, the hikes would be the largest in 14 years.

Feeling the weight of various tax increases and transit fare and other price rises, tenants said they could not afford higher rents.

The current law allows landlords to end controls on vacant apartments when the rent rises above \$2,000.

The rent increases approved this month will affect renewals on leases that expire on or after October 1, 2003. Leases that expire before then are subject to last year's increases: 2 percent for one-year leases and 4 percent for two years.

NEW YORKERS PROTEST "SALUTE TO OCCUPIERS" PARADE

Despite inclement weather, about 400 New Yorkers gathered on 5th Avenue June 1 to protest the "Salute to Israel" Parade. Demonstrators called for an immediate end to Israel's occupation of the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem. The protest was put together by the Palestine Activist Forum of New York, a coalition of local organizations.

FCC DECISION

from page 1

"More programming originates hundreds of miles away from listeners and their communities. And there are 34 percent fewer radio station owners than there were before safeguards were eliminated."

On May 29 hundreds of protesters in 12 different cities picketed outside Clear Channel offices to show their disdain for the growing monopoly in the radio industry.

Critics point out that Clear Channel stations choose songs from limited play lists, thus stifling independent artists and any semblance of diversity. Clear Channel also heavily employs the use of Voice Tracking, a system where computer-assisted voice segments are used to fool listeners into thinking the program is locally produced.

Giving reader a possible taste of things to come, the June2 issue of the NY Times reported on a FOX news affiliate that has begun to apply a similar strategy to several of their local television stations.

The Future

The investment firm Merrill Lynch has published a report titled "The Gold Rush Begins" in which it tells investors that large media corporations such as Viacom, News Corp., and Disney will make targeted acquisitions, particularly radio and television stations. It also says that small and mid-sized newspaper companies will be seen as likely targets for takeover by larger corporations.

Others, such as Rep. Ciro Rodriguez (D-Texas), worry about the effect on ethnic media. As head of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, Rodriguez recently sent a letter to the FCC expressing concern that the consolidation in media will have a negative effect on Hispanic-owned media.

According to a recent Pacifica News report, Clear Channel already has a stake in the No. 1 Spanish language television network, Univision. Telemundo, the second largest station, was purchased by NBC in 2002.

While the new rule changes are seen as a defeat for its opponents, there may be cause for optimism.

"The obscurity of this issue that many have relied upon in the past, where only a few dozen inside-the-Beltway lobbyists understood this issue, is gone forever," said Cops in his address at the June 2 hearing.

"Our citizens want, deserve, and are demanding a renewed discussion of how their airwaves are being used and how to ensure they are serving the public interest. I urge my colleagues to heed the call."



A protester demonstrates in front of Clear Channel's New York City office on May 29th.

PHOTO DIANE LENT

A SCANDAL A DAY KEEPS THE NEWS AWAY

By A.K. GUPTA

What is the news? Does it include *American Idol* and Laci Peterson? For a resounding number of Americans, the answer appears to be yes.

People are drawn to these sorts of stories because they titillate, entertain, horrify, enrage, excite and, once in a while, inform. The media "report" on them because they make money by delivering eyeballs to advertisers.

However the tabloid fodder completely disregards the news standard of having an impact on people's daily lives.

In contrast, SARS and the war on Iraq are quintessentially news. But how about AIDS and Afghanistan? Undoubtedly news as well, they garner far less coverage than their newer, sexier counterparts.

AIDS, ravaging Africa on a par with the black plague, is disregarded as old hat, and as happening to "them" – Africans and gays. SARS is novel, is spreading and could happen to "us."

Americans have as much chance of dying from SARS as they do of getting hit by space shuttle debris, but it captures the attention of enough people to ensure blanket coverage.

Iraq's sex appeal has faded somewhat, though the almost daily attacks on U.S. troops keep the country on the media radar.

Afghanistan, however, has joined Kelly Clarkson, last year's "American Idol," on the has-been list. The Taliban and Al Qaeda are back, as are the warlords. But American deaths, the ultimate driver of foreign coverage, are still sporadic there. Rebuilding roads, water works and schools isn't as exciting as firefights and carpet bombing. Most news organizations have long packed up and gone home.

In the hand-wringing after Sept. 11, observers pointed to the decline in international reporting as a factor in America's surprise at the attacks. As foreign coverage dwindled during the nineties, coverage of celebrities and crime surged. By 1996, foreign reports merited barely 20 percent of network news time, as opposed to 32 percent during the 1980s.

It was far more profitable to feed the public a steady diet of O.J., Princess Di, Wacko Jacko and lurid crime tales than to report on the economy, far-off conflicts and global ecocide.

It's easy to blame television for debasing public discourse, especially with shows like *When Animals Attack*, *Who's Hot* and *The Howard Stern Show*.

But sensationalism predates television. The first Hollywood scandal, involving silent-screen legend Fatty Arbuckle and a dead actress, took place in 1921 when print was king.

A generation earlier, "yellow journalism" became a household phrase during the Spanish-American War. In 1897 publisher Randolph Hearst is said to have telegraphed illustrator Frederick Remington in Cuba: "You furnish the pictures and I'll furnish the war."

"Remember the Maine" became the slogan of a rogue media willing to trade in rumor and lies to boost its readership. America's modern-day Maine is the World Trade Center. The fact that the Spanish had no role in the Maine's destruction was as irrelevant then as is the overwhelming lack of evidence today that Iraq played any role in Sept. 11.

Immediately afterwards, only two percent of Americans believed Saddam Hussein was involved. But a year of White House bellowing – dutifully relayed to the public as news – had the desired effect. Nowadays, numerous polls trumpet that over half of Americans think the fallen dictator bears responsibility for the attacks.

Predictably, the same is true of weapons of mass destruction. After months of baseless allegations, a recent University of Maryland poll finds that 41 percent of Americans now believe such weapons have been uncovered in Iraq or aren't sure. Even more astonishing, the poll found that 31 percent of Americans think Iraq used weapons of mass destruction during the war.

There's plenty of blame to spread around: profit-driven media, a blissfully ignorant public, and a corrupt FCC and Congress.

Media consolidation is another factor. When news is just another commodity, why do investigative or international reporting? Both are expensive with no guaranteed payoff.

Further concentration means fewer perspectives. But so does extremism. There was plenty of "diversity" and "localism" during the McCarthy era, but that didn't stop the press from egging on the anti-Communist witchhunts.

FOX's hard-right perspective boosted it into first place among the all-news stations during the war and got it favored treatment from the Pentagon. The results haven't gone unnoticed. MSNBC dumped Phil Donahue because it was afraid of becoming the peace channel and has signed Michael Savage, a gutter-mouthed brownshirt, instead.

The decline of journalism stems primarily from public apathy about government and its ability to have a positive impact on people's lives. Plus, economic uncertainty keeps most people too busy to keep track of the corruption, crimes, and outrages of the Bush regime. It's no wonder most Americans prefer the *World's Wildest Police Videos* over C-SPAN.

BUYING ACCESS

\$2.8 million and 71 meetings later

Top telecommunications and broadcast conglomerates met with FCC officials more than 71 times since May 1995. In that time the two industries lavished FCC officials with nearly \$2.8 million in travel and entertainment to over 2,500 destinations. Chairman Michael Powell fared best, raking in \$84,921 in 44 trips paid for by private interest groups such as the National Broadcasters Association.

One Public hearing

Despite receiving 750,000 petitions from the public, the FCC held just one open hearing on industry deregulation in the past two years. When pressed by CodePink activists during a meeting on May 15, Chairman Powell said the FCC would hold additional events to encourage public debate. Those meetings never took place.

How the media was lost

The rise and fall of media ownership laws



1941 Local Radio Ownership Rule. National TV Ownership Rule enacted. A broadcaster cannot own television stations that reach more than 35 percent of the nation's homes.

1946 Dual Television Network Rule enacted, prohibiting a major network from buying another major network.

1964 Local TV Multiple Ownership Rule enacted, prohibiting a broadcaster from owning more than one television station in the same market, unless there are at least eight stations in the market.

1970 Radio/TV Cross-Ownership Restriction enacted, prohibiting a broadcaster from owning a radio station and a television station in the same market.

1975 Ban enacted on cross-owning both a newspaper and a television station in the same market.



1981 Reagan Administration deregulation begins under FCC Chairman Mark Fowler. Deregulatory moves include extending television licenses to five years from three in 1981. The number of television stations any single entity could own grew from seven in 1981 to 12 in 1985.

1985 Guidelines for minimal amounts of non-entertainment programming are abolished. FCC guidelines on how much advertising can be carried per hour are eliminated.

1987 Fairness Doctrine eliminated.

At its founding the FCC viewed the stations to which it granted licenses as "public trustee" – and required that they make every reasonable attempt to cover contrasting points of view. The Commission also required that stations perform public service in reporting on crucial issues in their communities. Soon after he became FCC Chairman, Mark Fowler stated his desire to do away with the Fairness Doctrine. His position was backed by a 1987 D.C. Circuit Court decision, *Meredith Corp. v. FCC*, which ruled that the doctrine was not mandated by Congress and the FCC no longer had to enforce it.

All the Fiction Fit to Print

BY DONALD PANETH

The episode concerning a New York Times reporter who carried out an extravagant journalistic deception was of enormous interest to me.

It made me laugh; it is hilarious.

It is very funny because the reporters, editors and publisher of the Times have long-ceased to be professional journalists; they are amateurs.

Any good newspaper person can recognize a liar. That is part of the job. But it isn't part of the job anymore for those working on the Times.

They long ago traded in their professional status for their \$80,000-a-year plus salaries. They really don't give a damn anymore what they have to do to pick up those paychecks.

The Times misstates, misrepresents and manages the news, misleading and misinforming the public every day. It has become a semi-official organ of the United States government.

That is why it beats the rest of the mass media by at least a day with official announcements. The fellows in Washington give them a break. That is the pay-off the Times gets for accepting the nonsense the Bush administration dispenses as news and information.

The government-media deception arguably started in 1947 with the passage of the National Security Act, which required loyalty oaths from 2,200,000 executive branch employees. It developed further with the Alger Hiss trial and other political trials of the late 1940s and the 1950s.

But things really got going with Senator Joseph McCarthy (R-WI). McCarthy consolidated United States

anti-Communist policy at home and abroad. He skillfully used the press to publicize his charges of Communists in government. His allegations were never substantiated.

However, they were reported by newspapers, radio and television stations in objective fashion.

McCarthy proceeded for the next four years to make headlines. People suffered, and the country suffered.

What did the Times do? It published what McCarthy said, often on page one. It never challenged or questioned or investigated or examined what he was saying.

From time to time, it ran editorials saying that it didn't like McCarthy's methods; it was covering itself for printing the stuff in the first place. Today, it portrays itself as having opposed McCarthy.

In the 1950s, when the Eastland Senate committee investigated the press, the Times fired a couple of editorial staff members — Jack Schaefer and Les Barnett — who took the Fifth Amendment before the committee.

Members of the New York Newspaper Guild voted 3,185 to 2,064 in December 1955 that the Guild was not required to attempt to enforce contract provisions involving those who invoked the Fifth Amendment.

A survey published by the *New York Post*, then owned by the liberal Dorothy Schiff, in February 1956 reported that 75 percent of the nation's largest newspapers had either made no editorial comment on the Senate committee hearings or had endorsed them.

Then there was Assistant Secretary of Defense Arthur Sylvester. In the midst of the Cuban missile crisis of 1962, Sylvester declared that management of the news was "part of the arsenal of weaponry" available to an administration



McCARTHY: set the national standard for lying

in dealing with crises.

The "content and timing" of government-generated news could be used "in the application of international pressure," he said on October 30, 1962.

The most significant effect of press acquiescence in these matters was that it shut down on the dissemination and discussion of ideas in the mass media. It eliminated not just communist — but socialist, progressive, Democratic, liberal, conservative, different — viewpoints and anything that approached the truth.

And that is why there is no freedom of the press in the United States today. Freedom of the press itself used to be an issue that was discussed. It no longer is, and hasn't been for decades.

And the U.S. and the American public have ended up with a far-right, extremist, military-business-religious version of reality, events and government.

I trust that Jayson Blair got as big a laugh out of the stunt he pulled as I did.

Donald Paneth is a former reporter for The New York Times and the author of The Encyclopedia of American Journalism and other books.

The Failing Times

NEW YORK TIMES: IT'S LONG AND SORDID HISTORY

In its four-page overview of the Jayson Blair plagiarism affair, *The New York Times* takes an unusually self-flagellating posture and calls the reporter's deception "the low point" in the paper's history. While the Blair fiasco may have been an embarrassment for the Times, it is hardly the paper's historic "low point," as a perusal of the following incidents show.

1939-1945

For its 150-year anniversary, *The New York Times* publicly admits its Holocaust coverage was "grossly inadequate." Between 1939 and 1945, for example, the Times ran 532 Holocaust related stories, compared to just 1100 stories from 1939 to 1945. The stories that did run are usually brief and buried deep inside the paper

1950's-1970's

In "The Power Broker," Pulitzer Prize winning historian Robert Caro slams the Times for its uncritical and uncompromising support of Robert Moses, an infamous city planner who nearly destroyed New York City's physical structure. Caro argues that the Times "fell down on its knees before [Moses], and stayed there year after year."

1993

In order to supplement its relentlessly positive, pro-North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) coverage, the Times solicits advertisers to publish "advertorials" "educating" the public on NAFTA's merits. The Times sends these pro-NAFTA businesses a letter touting the "central importance..." of this important cause."

2002

In a press conference in the early fall, British Prime Minister Tony Blair and George W. Bush claim that a "new" report from the United Nations' International Atomic Energy Agency states Iraq is "six months away" from building a nuclear weapon. The next day, *New York Times* correspondents Judith Miller and Michael Gordon write, "Iraq has stepped up its quest for nuclear weapons and has embarked on a worldwide hunt for materials to make an atomic bomb, Bush administration officials said today." The only problem? No "new" report was ever published by the atomic agency.

1930's

As Soviet dictator Josef Stalin engages in a massive crackdown on dissidents and forcibly collectivizes thousands of farms, *New York Times* correspondent Walter Duranty, an open Stalin sympathizer, repeatedly argues in his reports that there is no Ukrainian famine. The famine is later determined to have killed approximately 10 million people.

1950

Amid McCarthy-era communist witch-hunts, *Times* management buckles under government pressure and fires employees who were former communists. *New York Times* publisher Arthur Hays Sulzberger himself publishes an op-ed that strongly criticizes witnesses' use of the Fifth Amendment before the House Committee on Un-American Activities.

1954

Allen Dulles, then head of the CIA, persuades Sulzberger to keep staff-reporter Sidney Gruson "away from Guatemala," even though Gruson's record shows him to be consistently supportive of U.S. Cold War policy. At the time, the CIA is organizing the overthrow of the Guatemala's government.

1982

***Times* reporter Raymond Bonner is completing a story on the 1981 massacre of 800 civilians in El Mozote, El Salvador by the U.S.-trained Atlacatl Battalion when his publishers remove him from the Central America beat. The Reagan Administration subsequently convinces Congress to bankroll a series of Central American wars that kill an estimated 200,000 people during the 1980s.**

2001

The *New York Times* initiates the now discredited investigation of Chinese American scientist Wen Ho Lee. In an apology that the Pacifica News Service argues sounds "more like a prosecution brief," PNS claims that examination is largely a "rehash of old material presented in a way that exonerates the Times and tries to cast further suspicion on Lee."

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The NYC-IMC Print Team will be holding an all-day community reporting workshop at our office on **Saturday, June 21, from 1-6pm**. We will review the basics of journalism and then explore lead writing, interviewing, story research and how to develop news and human interest stories. There will be lots of hands-on exercises, writing and small discussion groups.

RSVP: 212-684-8112
or e-mail imc-nyc-print@indymedia.org



February 8, 1996 President Clinton signs the Telecommunications Act of 1996, the most important legislation regulating media ownership in over a decade. The radio industry experiences unprecedented consolidation after the 40-station ownership cap is lifted. Clear Channel Communications owns 1200 stations, in all 50 states.

January 18, 2002 A train carrying hazardous materials derailed at 1:30 a.m. in Minot, North Dakota in an incident federal regulators call "catastrophic." Clear Channel owns six of seven commercial stations in Minot. Minot authorities say when they called with the warning about the toxic cloud there was no one on the air who could've made the announcement as the stations are unstaffed overnight.



September 7, 2002 The *New York Times* reports that the FCC will conduct a review of media ownership rules, as mandated by the Telecommunications Act of 1996. The FCC starts the review in September 2002.

September 9, 2002 ABC's *World News This Morning* is the only network show to acknowledge the FCC's announcement — at 4:40 a.m.

January 2, 2003 Comments on media ownership due to the FCC. Viacom (owner of CBS and UPN), General Electric (owner of NBC), and News Corporation's Fox Entertainment Group, among others, request that all media ownership rules be eliminated.



February 3, 2003 Thirty Congressmen sign a letter to Chairman Powell criticizing the FCC for not adequately publicizing the media ownership debate and rushing the rules-changing process to favor major media outlets.

February 17, 2003 The Project for Excellence in Journalism releases a five-year study of local television news. "Does Ownership Matter in Local Television News?" They found that TV stations owned by smaller media firms generally produce better newscasts; are better at local reporting; produce longer stories; and do fewer softball celebrity features.

February 27, 2003 FCC holds its only official public hearing on media ownership rules in Richmond, VA.

June 2, 2003 FCC guts decade-old limits on owning media outlets, driving the final nail in the coffin of the Fourth Estate.



BUSH DELIVERS EMERGENCY AIDS RELIEF TO CORPORATE AND RELIGIOUS CRONIES

BY JOHN TARLETON

George W. Bush signed a five-year, \$15 billion global AIDS relief bill to much fanfare last week in advance of the Group of 8 Summit in Evian, France. Besides giving Bush a PR boost, the measure may turn out to be of more help to U.S. pharmaceutical companies, "faith-based" religious groups and the biotech industry than to the citizens of 14 African and Caribbean countries covered by the initiative.

The new law designates more than half of the relief money for treatment. With the Bush administration largely circumventing the multilateral Global AIDS Fund, this is likely to be a thinly disguised giveaway to drug companies, which have fought a losing battle to prevent countries in the Global South from manufacturing generic versions of life-saving AIDS medications (see box).

"Any U.S. program that doesn't go through the Global AIDS Fund would have to buy U.S. products from U.S. companies and have to pay inflated prices for drugs that will go to fewer people and save fewer lives," said Salih Booker of Africa Action, a Washington, D.C.-based advocacy group.

An amendment by Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.) to guarantee that drugs of assured quality were purchased at the lowest possible price was rejected by the Republican majority. The GOP received \$20 million from the pharmaceutical industry in the 2002 election cycle, according to the Center for Responsive Politics.

Another 20 percent of Bush's relief funding goes to prevention. One-third of the prevention money must be spent on abstinence-before-marriage programs, even though public health officials widely consider them to be ineffective.

An additional 10 percent of the funding will go to assist orphans and vulnerable children. Faith-based groups will be eligible for at least half of that money. "It's just giving an increased role to faith-based organizations that is inappropriate," Booker said. "It's not like African countries don't have their own AIDS programs."

To receive any assistance at all, the 14

beneficiary countries from Africa and the Caribbean may first have to accept genetically engineered U.S. foods. Many African nations currently follow the European Union's lead in rejecting transgenic foods.

At a May 21 commencement address at the Coast Guard Academy in New London, Connecticut, Bush blasted the Europeans for thwarting the advance of biotech in Africa. Likewise, the AIDS bill chastises African countries that have large populations of HIV- or AIDS-infected citizens and who have rejected shipments of food aid fearing that it might be genetically engineered.

The U.S. spends 0.12 percent of its GNP (or about \$12 billion) on foreign aid, the stingiest of any major industrial country. There's no guarantee how much of the \$15 billion in AIDS money will actually be disbursed. Congress has to reallocate the money each year until 2008 a period that is likely to be one of soaring budget deficits. The fact that Bush is only asking for \$1.7 billion in AIDS relief funding for fiscal year 2004 suggests where his administration's priorities may lie. A House amendment that would have mandated full funding of Bush's initiative was decisively rejected.

"The devil is really in the details. Between the tax cuts and all the money being spent on terrorism, there's little discretionary money left," Pangaea Global AIDS Foundation policy director Fred Dillon told the *San Francisco Chronicle*. "It will be extremely difficult."

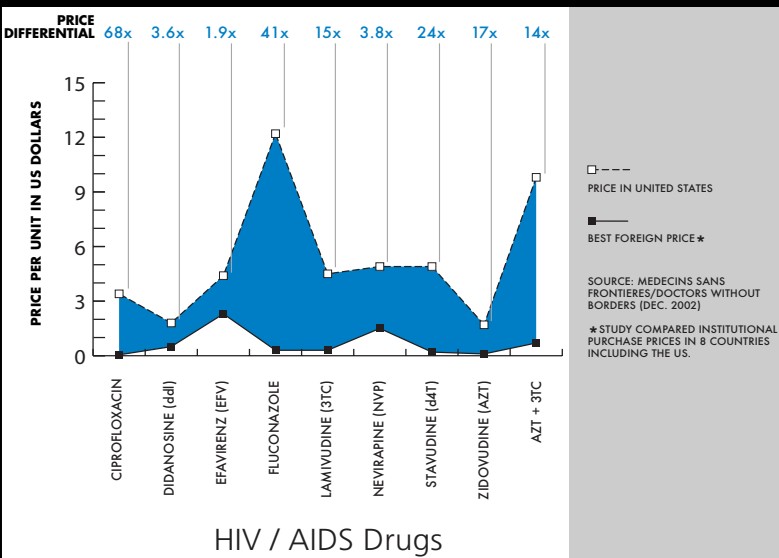
Upon signing the AIDS relief bill, Bush vowed to challenge America's key allies at the G8 summit in Evian, France, to increase

their spending in the fight against AIDS in line with the boosted U.S. program. This is one promise he was able to keep.

In July 2001, during massive anti-G8 demonstrations in Genoa, leaders from the

While tens of thousands of protesters rallied miles away, Bush calmly repeated his AIDS-fighting mantra calling it a "moral duty" to fight the disease. French President Jacques Chirac urged European leaders to match the

DRUG COMPANIES PUT PROFITS OVER PEOPLE



world's wealthiest nations (the United States, Japan, Germany, Britain, France, Canada and Italy plus Russia) sought to deflect protesters' anger by pledging to create a fund that would supply \$10 billion annually to the AIDS fight. The U.S. alone was going to supply \$3.5 billion per year. To date, the G8 countries have contributed only a small fraction of that.

The 2001 version of the AIDS relief plan received lots of favorable press, especially in the United States. So, why not try it again? The anti-G8 demonstrations were large and contentious (see page 7) again this year with Bush as Target Number One.

U.S. initiative and praised Bush saying "[He] took a decision in this area that I would not hesitate to call historic."

If Bush and company truly wish to alleviate Africa's AIDS crisis, they could begin by canceling the continent's unpayable foreign debt. IMF and World Bank austerity programs have decimated Africa's public health systems over the past two decades. The \$15 billion-plus per year in interest African nations are currently paying on debts accumulated under various military dictatorships dwarfs the size of any donations – real or fictitious – that Western countries have bestowed on them.

DONORS ASKED TO PAY FOR MALARIA TREATMENT THAT WORKS

BY VANESSA HRADSKY

In December 2000, G8 members meeting on Okinawa promised to fight infectious diseases, AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria. One of the objectives the G8 established for the year 2010 was a reduction in cases of malaria by fifty percent. Yet, malaria incidence remains the same.

Malaria cases account for 30-50 percent of hospital admissions and a loss of \$12 billion per year in Africa. It is the leading cause of death for children under five, and kills an African child every 30 seconds.

"The G8 and African leaders, goal of halving malaria deaths by 2010 will remain a fantasy unless donors are willing to help pay for treatment that works," says Dr. Bernard Pécoul, director of Doctors Without Borders Campaign for Access to Essential Medicines.

An April 2003 report by the group, "ACT Now," shows that major donor agencies are continuing to support cheap but failing malaria treatments in Africa despite a rising death toll. The report states that there were

four times as many malaria cases in the 1990s as in the 1970s, and death rates in African hospitals rose two-to-three fold.

The increased treatment failure has been caused primarily by the continuing use of drugs that have become ineffective due to high levels of resistance. The report calls on international donors to support the rapid implementation of artemisinin-based combination therapy (ACT), a proven treatment promoted by the World Health Organization. Chloroquine, the treatment of choice for malaria since 1969, led to falling death rates until the early 1980s, but no longer works in most countries.

Donors, especially the United States and the United Kingdom, are objecting to ACT's higher cost. While older drugs cost around \$0.10, an adult dose of ACT currently costs about \$1.50, but is expected to drop to \$0.50-\$0.80 in 2004-2005.

Whether the West will decide to act to eradicate malaria by providing the necessary funding for this new treatment remains to be seen.

THE TOLL: MALARIA AND OTHER DEADLY DISEASES

MALARIA	300-500 million new cases/year, 1-2 million deaths/year, 90 percent in Africa.
AIDS	42 million current cases; 3 million deaths in 2002 worldwide.
CANCER	10 million new cases/year; 6 million deaths in 2000 worldwide.
TUBERCULOSIS	8 million new cases of active TB/year; 2 million deaths/year, mainly in poor countries.
INFLUENZA	3-5 million cases/year; 250,000-500,000 deaths/year worldwide.

Sources: World Health Organization, Medecins Sans Frontieres.

BACK TO BUSINESS: TEAR GAS AND HOT AIR ENVELOP G8 SUMMIT



TAKE THAT: Despite predictions to the contrary, the global justice movement is alive and well.

BY CHRIS ANDERSON

Once again, mainstream media reports about the meeting of the Group of 8 (G8) in Evian, France, tended to settle in one of two camps: stilted regurgitations of the official pronouncements from the world's most powerful white men; or histrionic tales of "rioting anarchists," "violent protesters" and "the end of the anti-globalization movement." As usual the reality of the events was squashed in the middle.

Two years after massive demonstrations against the G8 in Genoa, Italy, saw the death of one protester, and two months since the end of the American-led invasion of Iraq, the first relatively accessible economic summit since September 11, 2001, opened amid a host of questions. How much wind remained in the sails of the global justice movement following the massive but ultimately unsuccessful attempt to stop the war against Iraq? How would divisions between G8 leaders play out in the summit and on the streets? Would there be widespread violence?

Like many global economic summits in

the past three years, the host town of Evian was completely sealed off from the outside world. After holding counter-conferences and meetings throughout the entire week, protesters blocked roads and bridges leading to Evian on Sunday, June 1, the first day of the global meeting.

Up to 150,000 people joined in the protest – a far cry from the 400,000 who descended on Genoa two years ago, but a number certainly large enough to put to rest the refrain that the so-called "anti-globalization" movement had ended. And while differences between France, Germany, Russia and the United States were certainly on display, the eight nations seemed largely in agreement when it came to matters concerning the world economy. In a telling moment, G8 leaders hailed Germany's recent decision to dramatically curtail social service programs by giving "[German Chancellor Gerhard] Schroeder a round of applause and backslaps when he arrived late to Sunday night's dinner," according to Associated Press reports.

Based on reports posted on Indymedia, incidents of summit violence were largely sporadic but intense. Two Britons were

injured in clashes with police, both severely. Tear gas and rubber bullets were fired at protesters in Geneva and Lausanne, while in an action reminiscent of events in Genoa, the Independent Media Center in Geneva was invaded by police disguised as anarchists.

Nonetheless, according to an overview found on the UK-Indymedia website, "crossroads in Lausanne, bridges in Geneva, and main access roads from Annemasse towards Evian were blocked by protesters as early as 6 am, with rhythms, sound systems, dancing, and color." In perhaps the symbolic highlight of Sunday's protest actions, an estimated 120,000 people converged on the French-Swiss border chanting "no frontiers, freedom of movement." "It's not just been three days of riots," wrote UK-Indymedia. "The camps and forums and social spaces have been rocking and the locals, in both France and Switzerland, have come out and actively supported the activists."

As opposed to past years, virtually no G8 "solidarity actions" were held on the North American side of the Atlantic Ocean. In this regard, the fallout – from the unsuccessful anti-war movement may be less encouraging. Much, however, remains to be seen. From June 20-25, the World Trade Organization (WTO) and representatives from more than 180 countries will meet in Sacramento, California. And this fall, the WTO meets in Cancun for what some are calling "the most important WTO meeting ever."



GREETINGS FROM EVIAN: Up to 150,000 people turned out to welcome the rulers of the world.

G8 BACKGROUND WHERE THE ELITE MEET TO CARVE UP THE PLANET

NOTE: This article has been adapted from "A Seed Europe" at www.aseed.net.

Created in 1975, the Group of 8 has consistently pushed for a model of economic globalization that benefits large multinational corporations. Although G8 meetings are supposedly informal, the outcome of many meetings is enforced by international institutions like the IMF, WB and WTO. The G8 can be seen as a kind of world government, as its discussions and decisions influence the economies and the daily lives of people all over the world.

MONETARY POLICY

The G8 (originally seven countries – U.S., U.K., France, Italy, Germany, Canada and Japan – Russia joined in recent years) was created in the transitional period between the Bretton Woods era, also known as the "Keynesian order" and today's "neo-liberal order." Before this time, global trade was limited and countries had far greater freedom to pursue their own monetary policies and to protect their national currency and economy.

Beginning in the 1970s, exchange rates (and the dollar especially) began to fluctuate unpredictably. Soaring inflation and inflated oil prices also caused concern. The necessity of imposing more international coordination led to the creation of what became known as "the G8." Discussions mainly focused on monetary stability and macro-economic agreements to prevent some countries from devaluing their currency or adopting protectionist measures at the expense of

other wealthy nations.

GEOPOLITICS

In recent years, discussions at G8 meetings have been primarily about geopolitical issues like hunger, debt and security. The war in Iraq and mud-slinging between France, Germany and the U.S. weighed heavily on G8 discussions this year. G8 leaders usually do their utmost to present the G8 as a "charity summit," and this year's meetings were no exception. However, pronouncements that promise a few cheap medicines here, a few million Euro worth of debt relief there, have historically amounted to very little.

GROWING OPPOSITION

Protests against G8 policies first garnered public attention in 1998, as over 70,000 people demanding Third World debt relief formed a "human protest chain" at a G8 meeting in Birmingham, England. Similar protests followed in 1999 at the G8 meetings in Cologne, Germany, from June 18-20. The 1999 meetings were significant due to both the G8 "international solidarity protests" that occurred in dozens of cities, as well as the violence that marred London protests on June 18.

The largest anti-G8 protests to date occurred in Genoa, Italy, in July 2001: hundreds of thousands of people protested the summit; police provocateurs and a small group of thugs incited violent street riots; a young Italian anarchist was shot and killed by police, and an Indymedia center was attacked by cops. In 2002, the G8 fled to the largely inaccessible mountains of Kananaskis, Canada.

ALL ABOARD the Global Justice Express

BY CHRIS ANDERSON

June 20-21, 2003, Thessaloniki, Greece: During meetings of the European Union in Greece, "international anti-imperialist, anti-war" activists will meet for a series of workshops, debates and direct-action protests.
For more information: www.thessalonikiresist2003.gr/en/newsframeset_en.htm

June 20-25, 2003, Sacramento, California: The World Trade Organization (WTO) and representatives from more than 180 countries will meet at the Sacramento Trade Ministerial. Global justice activists will meet to engage in "a festival of diverse resistance to big biotech, bioimperialism, the Bush Administration and 'free trade'" For more information: sacmobilization.org

Sept. 10-14, 2003, Global justice campaigners write that "the Cancun Ministerial will be the most important meeting to date for the WTO," and argue that "the 'free' trade system being imposed via the WTO is undercutting the livelihoods of peasant and family farmers, workers, [and] indigenous peoples." For more information: www.nadir.org/nadir/initiativ/agp/free/cancun/mobilization.htm

Nov. 19-21, 2003, Miami, Florida: The Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) and the Trade Ministerial on the FTAA will meet in Florida this fall. The proposed pact would largely extend the North American Free Trade Agreement across the Western Hemisphere. For more information: www.tallahassee.indymedia.org

NATION IN BRIEF WORLD

AFGHANISTAN'S HIDDEN KILLER

Afghanis from Narganthar province suffer from uranium contamination at levels 100 to 400 times that of 1991 Gulf War veterans, according to a recent study released by the Uranium Medical Research Center in Washington.

Narganthar was at the receiving end of new "cave-busting" and seismic shock warheads. Although scientists found no traces of depleted uranium, symptoms exhibited by hundreds of civilians closely mirror that of Gulf War Syndrome which has been linked to D.U. exposure. The report concludes that if Narganthar's levels are corroborated throughout Afghanistan, the country will face a severe public health risk.

BASQUES GAIN IN SPAIN

Spain's main Basque political party, Batasuna, received ten percent of the ballot in May 25th's Basque municipal elections, despite being banned by the Spanish Supreme Court in early March. Basque dissidents have recently come under fire in Spain, including the closure of the newspaper Egunkaria, under the guise of connections with the armed separatist group, ETA, but Basque Premier Juan Jose Ibarretxe still plans to introduce a referendum for greater autonomy from Madrid. Spanish Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar flatly denied any room for negotiation on Ibarretxe's proposal.

N. IRELAND ELECTIONS CANCELED

May 29 — Led by Sinn Fein President, Gerry Adams, thousands protested in Northern Ireland against Tony Blair's unilateral cancellation of Assembly elections. While Blair claims the cancellation was necessary because of the IRA's failure to declare an end to all paramilitary activity, the decision has been strongly criticized from all sides of the Irish political spectrum. Many are calling the move a blatant attempt at maintaining a Unionist administration. In New York, several dozen protesters gathered across from the British Consulate, one carrying a sign reading, "Democracy for Iraq and the Six Counties."

ASHCROFT FIGHTS THE LAW

Attorney General John Ashcroft has launched a sweeping attack against a 214-year-old law that has helped provide justice to Nazi Holocaust victims and peasants from Latin America and Asia.

The law, the 1789 Alien Tort Claims Act, has been used with increasing frequency by victims of serious rights abuses committed overseas by foreign government leaders and senior military officials, as well as by United States and foreign-owned corporations. Actions have been brought under the law to get a hearing before U.S. federal courts.

Ashcroft's Justice Department has asked the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals in California to effectively throw out all cases that deal with abuses that allegedly took place overseas, arguing that the law is "somewhat of a historical relic" abused by plaintiffs in efforts to enforce international human rights laws and norms.

MORE U.N. TROOPS FOR CONGO

With the parties in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the United Nations standing at the intersection of peace and war, U.N. Secretary-General recommended June 2, 2003 that the U.N. mandate in the Congo be extended until June 2003 and that its military strength be increased to nearly 11,000 troops.

HOWARD DEAN: YANKEE DOODLE BLANDY

BY CHRIS FLEISHER

"I'm Howard Dean, and I'm here to represent the Democratic wing of the Democratic Party." If this phrase seems familiar, it's because the late Minnesota Senator Paul Wellstone employed these same words in his re-election bid shortly before his death last year. Like Wellstone, Dean seems to believe what he is saying. But unlike Wellstone, Dean's record is far from consistently liberal.

Though he is no longer unique among Democratic candidates in his opposition to the war on Iraq, many liberals remain attached to Dean as their candidate for 2004. Rob Reiner has endorsed Dean, and his anti-war speeches have been met with enthusiastic applause.

But what about important liberal issues other than the war — for example, gun control and the environment?

Dean on gun control: "We need to resist attempts to tell states how to deal with guns beyond existing federal law."

On the environment, Dean is ambiguous. He criticizes Bush for his rejection of the Kyoto Protocol, yet says "we have to make practical trade offs" for "houses, jobs and opportunities for growth." Vermont environmentalists have taken him to task over his record, accusing him of paving the way for business interests at the expense of environmental protection.

"Dean's attempt to run for president as an environmentalist is nothing but a fraud," said Annette Smith, the director of Vermonters for a Clean Environment, in an interview

"It's a pathetic thing that I'm the most progressive candidate."

—Dean on his 2004 Presidential campaign



with Wild Matters. "He's destroyed the Agency of Natural Resources, he's refused to meet with environmentalists while constantly meeting with the development community, and he's made the permitting process one big, dysfunctional joke."

Of late, the debate has turned to healthcare and, as a former physician, Dean would appear to have the inside track. Though he praises national healthcare such as those found in Canada and France, he has taken note of what happened to Hillary Clinton years ago and is being careful not to present a plan that appears too radical.

Under Dean's plan, states would be required to guarantee coverage for all children under age 23 while the federal government would assume responsibility for drug and acute medical care for Americans over age 65. For those between the ages 23 and 65, insurance from the private sector would be the first line of defense, with federal subsidies covering low and moderate income Americans who lack insurance. In effect, requirements for providers will change while leaving the existing system the same.

Despite these moderate positions, Dean's antiwar speeches have the press crowning him as the great liberal hope for 2004. Here are some recent headlines:

Washington Times: "'Gutsy' Dean rouses Democrats with call to arms";

Associated Press: "Dean urges Democrats to stand for something";

Washington Post: "In N.H., Howard Dean rallies antiwar troops";

Newsweek writes, "So far, the boat rising fastest on the antiwar tide belongs to Howard Dean."

The irony is that Dean rejects any notion that he is liberal. His campaign website, www.deanforamerica.com, describes him as "a common-sense moderate who firmly believes that social justice can only be accomplished through strong financial management."

The Progressive quotes Dean as saying, "It's a pathetic thing that I'm the most progressive candidate," among those considered to have a serious shot at the nomination.

As the issues drift further from the war in Iraq, expect Dean's campaign to drift further toward the middle. His shtick is not the war in Iraq or even representing "the Democratic wing of the Democratic Party." His socially liberal, fiscally conservative policies bear comparison to Bill Clinton, another small-state governor who followed the middle of the road all the way to the White House.



BY ANN M. SCHNEIDER
FOR THE NATIONAL LAWYERS GUILD

What's Latin good for? Isn't it a dead language? Not when your name is Osama Awadallah.

Twenty-two-year-old college student Osama Awadallah was taken into custody in California shortly after September 11. He spent 83 days in prison after the Justice Department designated him a material witness, an infrequently used provision of the 1984 Bail Reform Act allowing prosecutors to hold potential grand jury witnesses. During his three-month detention, Awadallah was kept in isolation, not allowed any phone calls to or from his family, and transferred to another prison across the country without his lawyer's knowledge.

What did the 22-year-old Awadallah do? His telephone number appeared in a phonebook kept by Khalid Al-Mihdar, one of the Pentagon attackers on September 11.

Awadallah attended the same mosque as Al-Mihdar, like hundreds of other Muslims in the same California community. Awadallah had no idea why the hijacker jotted down his number; at first he didn't even remember meeting him. But after testifying to this, the Justice Department charged Awadallah for perjury and held him for an additional 80 days.

Luckily for Awadallah, his case came before a courageous and scholarly judge — Judge Shira Scheindlin of the Southern District of New York. Reviewing his case, and the tortured path Awadallah traversed from college student to material witness to accused perjurer in the largest terrorism case ever, Judge Scheindlin ruled that Ashcroft's Department of Justice had misused the material witness laws in detaining Awadallah and violated his habeas corpus rights.

This two-word Latin phrase, enshrined in Article One of the Constitution, is your right to have a judge, and not the police or a prosecutor, determine if you are rightfully detained. In Awadallah's case, the Justice Department used the material witness statute, and spurious perjury charges, to keep Awadallah incarcerated and

wring out information that, in the end, he simply did not possess.

Unfortunately, Awadallah's case is not unique. In the Oregon case of Mike Hawash, Judge Robert Jones ruled on April 7, 2003, that the material witness statute can be used to hold someone whose testimony is desired by a prosecutor to present to a grand jury — but not indefinitely. He ordered the U.S. Attorney to present Mr. Hawash's testimony to the grand jury by a definite date. (Instead of releasing him, the prosecutor filed criminal charges against him. The prosecution will now have the burden of substantiating their charges against Hawash beyond a reasonable doubt.)

The previously obscure statute has emerged as a significant tool of the federal government's arsenal. In a 60-page report delivered to the House Judiciary Committee on May 20, the Department of Justice revealed for the first time that "fewer than 50" people have been detained on material witness charges since September 11. The federal government refused to give a precise number, claiming that release of even the true number of detainees "would be detrimental to the war on terror." What is truly frightening is that Ashcroft would apparently like to have witnesses "in stock," confined under conditions that can amount to coercion. Imagine what effect detention at the prosecution's whim would have on the truthfulness of witnesses!

Judge Scheindlin's ruling conflicts with that of her colleague, Judge Michael Mukasey of the U.S. District Court in New York, and the conflict will now be resolved by the appeals court. Awadallah's lawyer is not confident his constitutional victory will last. In an impassioned ruling, Scheindlin quoted from a 1967 United States Supreme Court case, *US v. Robel*: "It would indeed be ironic if, in the name of national defense, we would sanction the subversion of one of those liberties... which makes the defense of the Nation worthwhile."

Awadallah's lawyer, Jesse Berman, and NLG members Lynne Stewart, Geoffrey Stewart and Gerald Lefcourt contributed information to this report. The opinions expressed in this column do not necessarily reflect the position of the National Lawyers Guild (www.nlg.org).

SOCIALISM LIVES! (IN IRAQ)

BY BARBARA EHRENREICH

With Washington fixated on the looming policy war between the Departments of State and Defense, almost no one has noticed an even stranger development within the Bush administration – its sudden, and apparently wholehearted, embrace of socialism.

Echoing sentiments expressed in an earlier era by Eugene V. Debs and Woody Guthrie, Colin Powell declared recently, “Iraq’s oil belongs to the Iraqi people.” There’s been no comment yet from Exxon Mobil on the possible application of this principle to the homeland, but Powell’s words seemed sincere – unlike those other feel-good phrases the right’s always tossing off, like “compassionate conservatism” and “free elections.”

In fact, the conservative press is filled with ideas for how to distribute the wealth to the people and keep it out of the hands of “Iraqi elites.”

In addition to spreading the oil wealth around, the Bush administration has committed itself to generous public services – though only, so far, in Iraq.

Schools will be repaired, damaged infrastructure rebuilt and education made available even to the poorest. There will be quality health care for all. Imagine: A universal health program, of the kind that has eluded Americans for at least half a century, will be created with a snap of the imperial fingers in Iraq.

Did I say socialism? Make that democratic socialism, verging on utopian anarchism. In President Bush’s vision of the

ideal state, there will be perfect democracy combined with a sweetly forgiving attitude toward wrongdoers. Already, Iraqis are free to demonstrate by the thousands, shouting, “Americans get out!” and even ruder things. Commenting on the looting that swept Baghdad in the first days of that city’s invasion by U.S. troops, Secretary of

likely to display uncommon warmth and affection just after administering a hearty beating. So too, perhaps, our leaders who, having briefly sated their aggressions during “shock and awe,” are now filled with the milk of human kindness.

Actually, someone has noticed the administration’s swerve to the left: the sharp-

Echoing sentiments expressed in an earlier era by Eugene V. Debs and Woody Guthrie, Colin Powell declared recently, “Iraq’s oil belongs to the Iraqi people.”

Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld stated (defense lawyers please take note): “It’s untidy. And freedom’s untidy. And free people are free to make mistakes and commit crimes and do bad things.”

That’s not, I suspect, what Rumsfeld was saying after the rioting that followed the Rodney King decision.

What came over the Bush administration, which has in this country engaged in a relentless campaign to limit civil liberties and eliminate the last shreds of the welfare state? Is it possible that military triumph – no matter how inevitable given the weakness of the enemy – has melted their hard little hearts? Those who study domestic violence say that a wife abuser is

eyed Maxine Waters. A Los Angeles Times column reports: “Much to her surprise, the federal government is promising to do everything Los Angeles Congresswoman Maxine Waters has spent years fighting for [she] just never figured the beneficiaries would be residents of Iraq.”

In the annals of armed conflict, there has never been an outcome quite like this, where the victors coddle the defeated enemy while visiting misery on their own people.

As for the troops we were all vigorously enjoined to “support” with our flags and yellow ribbons – they will come home to find their veterans’ benefits cut by an estimated \$15 billion over the next 10 years.

American veterans’ hospitals, which



already resemble the looted hospitals of downtown Baghdad, will soon have fewer amenities to offer than morgues.

There is a solution, and I do not mean the tedious, exasperating work of building a mass movement for social justice in the homeland. No, it’s far simpler than that: The solution is mass emigration to Iraq.

There’s plenty of available housing in Iraq, though mostly of the “handyman’s special” variety, thanks to the unfortunate side effects of the American liberation.

It’s still a challenge to get a visa, of course, because of the defunct condition of the Iraqi Embassy, but a nice letter to Jay Garner or his new boss, L. Paul Bremer III, may do the trick.



Azelene Kiagang wants Brazil to recognize native land rights.

BY JENNIFER TIERNEY

There is something to be said for perseverance. Eventually, it pays off.

To Marcos Terena, a chief of the Terena tribe in Brazil, “eventually” stretches into more than 500 years of perseverance for indigenous people – and still counting.

Terena is generally credited with kick-starting the Brazilian indigenous movement in the 1970s. For decades he has doggedly campaigned for an international platform for indigenous voices. So he might have felt

year, 13 indigenous people have been assassinated in Brazil.

The principal motive for the killings is indigenous land rights, says Kiagang. “These are not isolated incidents.”

For indigenous people everywhere, the right to live on their ancestral lands is the basic issue at the root of all the others – cultural identity, self-determination, economic survival. In 1992 when Marcos Terena was chosen by 92 native nations to speak to a U.N. summit that excluded them, he read the words, “We, the Indigenous

INDIGENOUS PEOPLE AIR GRIEVANCES AT UNITED NATIONS

some pleasure last month in New York at the second session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.

The U.N. created the Forum in 2000, six years into what it declared the “Decade of Indigenous People.”

To Terena’s compatriot, Azelene Kiagang, a Kiagang woman (Brazilian indigenous people often use their tribal name as a last name), the Forum provides an international stage to shame the government into action. So far this

Peoples, walk to the future in the footprints of our ancestors. The footprints of our ancestors are permanently etched upon the lands of our peoples.”

Although “Indigenous Youth” was the theme for this year’s Forum, most spoke about land. Many condemned the deleterious effect of the “extraction” industries – gold, uranium, oil, logging, etc. – on the land. Others singled out development projects that promote single plant cultivation, often using genetically modified seeds, for its impact on indigenous lands.

Speakers emphasized that land marked with indigenous ancestors’ footprints was no longer open to negotiation, treaty or compromise. That said, more than 2,000 indigenous representatives made the trek to give the white man’s law one more try.

Kiagang hopes international publicity will compel Brazilian President Luis Inácio “Lula” da Silva to fulfill a campaign promise to officially recognize the 555 territories identified as indigenous ancestral lands.

“Ninety-five percent of indigenous people in Brazil voted for Lula,” says Kiagang. “We worked in his campaign.” He has not responded so far to the pressure.

In their eyes, Lula’s silence gives tacit permission to ranchers, gold prospectors and others who covet those lands for commercial use to harass indigenous people.

While the Forum is not an official venue

for denunciations, most representatives, like Kiagang, took advantage of the international audience to do just that. The representative of the Ogoni people of Nigeria related the story of the exploitation of their land by oil companies, particularly Shell.

He explained that the oil companies have more than 100 oil wells, two refineries, petrochemical and fertilizer complexes, an ocean terminal and an export processing zone in Ogoni land. But “none of these companies employ Ogoni people in any serious positions. These companies are rather the agents of the death of the Ogoni people.”

Whether these international displays of outrage will move da Silva to demarcate indigenous territory or the Nigerian government to regulate oil concessions remains to be seen. The Forum has nonetheless provided an opportunity for disparate peoples to tell their stories. Terenas and Kiagangs from the jungles of South America can exchange their stories with African Ogonis about commercial interests bent on destroying the land of their ancestors. Perhaps eventually, storytelling will bring about change.

This is not the usual U.N. crowd, which is just fine with Marcos Terena.

“The Forum shouldn’t follow the model of the U.N. bureaucracy,” he added. “If we use the colonizers’ example, we will be divided.”

“First, let’s talk as real, not professional, indigenous people, and then we’ll see.”

TRANSLATED BY ANDY ROBINSON

After two years working 12 hour shifts at \$6 an hour for Superflex Limited, a hose factory in Sunset Park (Brooklyn), Antonio López, an undocumented immigrant, woke up one morning soaked in blood. Hospitalized for 15 days, he was diagnosed with severe kidney deficiency, a result of chemical poisoning of his blood. "We weren't given gloves, masks, nothing. I'm not surprised I was poisoned" says Lopez. "We couldn't even take a break. They made us have lunch right next to the machines with the chemicals."

That was October 2000. Since then López has been unable to work. Three times a week he attends a hospital several miles away where his blood is cleansed by a dialysis machine that does the work of his destroyed kidneys. Each session takes up to three hours and he has permanent tubes placed under the skin of his right arm.

López lives alone in Bushwick, in the basement of a building owned by a friend. On treatment days he has to take the subway at 4:30 a.m. to the Nephrology Foundation on Coney Island where Medicaid will cover the cost of his treatment and prescription charges. At least for the moment.

Three years on, the case against Superflex Limited has still not gone to court due to the constant appeals made by company lawyers. López's legal representation is Make the Road By Walking, a non-profit organization in Bushwick that campaigns against labor injustices encountered by immigrants.

"When I returned to the factory after two kidney operations, my boss told me he was firing me because he didn't want workers with health problems. The first few months were tough because I didn't know who to turn to. Then a priest at my local church told me about Make the Road By Walking where I was able to share my experience with other workers. In only 15 days their lawyers had prepared my case and filed suit."

Make the Road By Walking is now a vital part of López's life. "I call round whenever I feel up to it. I'm now on the team responsible for the Labor Justice project. I do a bit of everything from administrative tasks and organization to making dinner. It's a way of feeling useful."

To get more information:

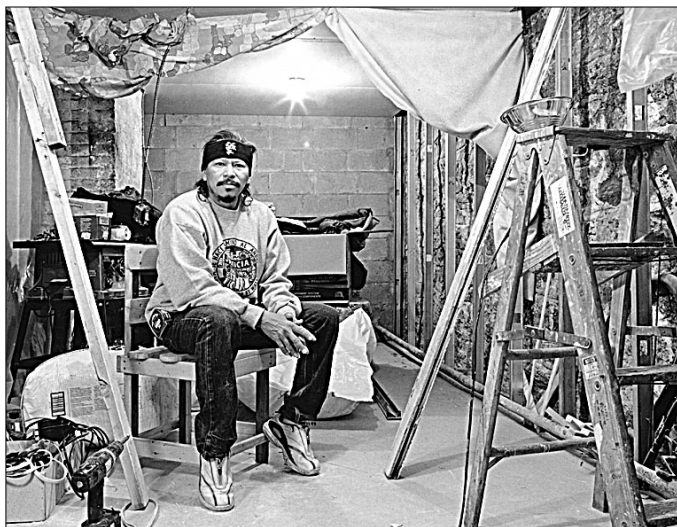
about Make The Road By Walking or Antonio López, visit www.maketheroad.org or call (718) 418-7690.



AN IMMIGRANT'S TALE

EN LOS BRAZOS DE EE.UU.

STORY + PHOTOS:
LOURDES DELGADO





Tras trabajar dos años fabricando mangueras, en turnos de doce horas, para Superflex Limited en Sunset Park (Brooklyn), Antonio López, un inmigrante indocumentado, despertó el 14 de octubre del 2000 bañado en sangre. Después de quince días en el hospital fue diagnosticado con una grave deficiencia renal por intoxicación de la sangre con sustancias químicas.

"No nos permitían tomar ni un descanso; incluso nos hacían comer al lado de las máquinas", explica Antonio López, quien por ese empleo ganaba sólo \$6 la hora. "Como no nos daban ni guantes, ni mascarillas, ni nada, no es extraño que me envenenara".

Desde entonces se encuentra incapacitado para trabajar y necesita diálisis tres veces por semana. En este tratamiento, una máquina hace las veces de riñón, aspirando la sangre mediante unos tubos permanentes colocados bajo la piel de su brazo derecho, elimina los residuos y la devuelve limpia al organismo. Cada sesión dura más de tres horas y es extenuante.

Antonio López vive solo en Bushwick, en el sótano del edificio de un amigo. Los días de tratamiento, a las 4:30 de la mañana, debe tomar el tren subterráneo hacia la Fundación Nefrológica de Coney Island, donde un Medicaid temporal le cubre los gastos de la diálisis y de los medicamentos. Al menos por el momento.

Aunque han pasado casi tres años, el juicio contra Superflex Limited sigue pendiente debido a las apelaciones de los abogados de la compañía. A Antonio López lo representa "Se Hace Camino al Andar", una organización sin fines de lucro de Bushwick, que se ha destacado por su lucha contra las injusticias laborales a las que se ven sometidos muchos inmigrantes.

"Cuando regresé a la fábrica después de dos operaciones de riñón, mi jefe me dijo que me despedía porque no querían enfermos. Los primeros meses fueron muy duros porque no sabía a quién recurrir. Hasta que el sacerdote de mi parroquia me habló de "Se Hace Camino al Andar". Allí pude compartir mi experiencia con otros trabajadores, y en sólo quince días, sus abogados presentaron la denuncia".

En poco tiempo, esta organización se ha convertido en una parte muy importante de su vida.

"Voy siempre que me siento bien. Ahora soy uno de los responsables del proyecto Justicia Laboral. Hago de todo: desde tareas administrativas y de organización del grupo, a ayudar a preparar la cena con la que terminamos nuestras reuniones. Es una forma de sentirme útil".



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EL INDEPENDIENTE

ASESINADO POR RECOGER FRESAS

UNIÓN DE CAMPESINOS DE AMÉRICA (UFW)
 TRADUCIDO POR SILVIA ARANA

Sí, es así, no hay un error en el título. Fue asesinado. El 18 de mayo de este año, el campesino Mauricio Cruz recogió unas fresas que estaban todavía verdes en la Finca Zepeda, condado de Santa Cruz, California. Por el "crimen imperdonable" de recoger fruta que no está madura, este cosechador de fresas de 35 años de edad perdió la vida. Fue asesinado por José Flores, el capataz de la finca. Enojado, Flores le disparó primero en la espalda, y luego en la cabeza. Mauricio Cruz, se desplomó y murió de inmediato. Flores logró escapar y permanece fugitivo, hasta la fecha.

Parece increíble que un malentendido en la cosecha de fresas pueda haber causado este crimen. Cuando nos enteramos del asesinato, los miembros de la Unión de Campesinos sentimos indignación.

Sin embargo, aunque sea triste admitirlo, no sentimos una gran sorpresa o shock, porque el asesinato de Mauricio Cruz no fue un hecho aislado en la comunidad de campesinos inmigrantes. Forma parte de una larga y lamentable historia de violencia contra los trabajadores agrícolas inmigrantes en Estados Unidos.

Uno de los asesinatos en serie más notorios del país, Juan Corona, fue un contratista de trabajadores agrícolas, en California. La mayoría de la víctimas, brutalmente asesinadas, fueron campesinos inmigrantes. Y se cree, que hubo muchas más víctimas, a las que nunca se identificó.

Según una investigación realizada en 1999 por el Departamento de Estadísticas Laborales, los campesinos sufren el porcentaje más alto de lesiones en el trabajo entre las diez mayores industrias evaluadas.

Los registros de datos de la Unión de Campesinos muestra que los campesinos sufren de manera constante ataques violentos. Por ejemplo:

Un capataz de una plantación de lechuga, en la región central de California, perdió el control cuando un trabajador que acababa de ser despedido, preguntó cuándo le iban a pagar. "Me agarró de los cabellos y me arrastró por el suelo.

La cumbre del G8



Me pateó en las costillas y en la cabeza. Quedé al borde de un acantilado y me empujó hacia abajo, caí a una profundidad de unos 45 pies. Bajó con un palo y siguió pegándose. Ahí perdí el conocimiento."

En Wasco, California, el dueño de una plantación de sandías se puso furioso cuando los trabajadores se negaron a quitar maleza porque no tenían guantes adecuados que los protegieran de las espigas. Según un reporte noticioso, el dueño empuñó un revólver y empezó a disparar a los pies de los campesinos. Luego los obligó a sentarse y disparó alrededor de ellos, tan cerca que una de las balas traspasó la gorra de uno de los campesinos. No lo mató de pura casualidad. Para terminar, golpeó a uno de ellos con un bastón. Fue arrestado con varios cargos, pero negoció quedando con un solo cargo: portación de armas.

Ocho adolescentes blancos se metieron en una campamento de inmigrantes. Golpearon a cinco campesinos y les robaron. Los arrastraron, los golpearon con barras de metal y los hirieron con perdigones. Uno de los campesinos,

de 69 años de edad, recibió una golpiza tan brutal, que los atacantes pensando que lo habían matado, volvieron a la escena del crimen para esconder el cuerpo. La policía evaluó que se había tratado de ataques motivados por odio racial.

Las vidas de los campesinos tienen un precio muy bajo. Sus desapariciones y abusos constantes no son noticia. Con la excepción de un par de artículos breves en periódicos locales de California, no hemos visto ningún reporte en la prensa sobre la muerte de Mauricio Cruz.

Sin embargo, los campesinos si han tomado nota del crimen. Han aprendido la triste lección que dejan estos hechos terroríficos: No hagas enojar al jefe... nunca cometes un error... vive con miedo.

Pasan una gran parte de su vida con miedo. Miedo a los peligros inherentes al trabajo agrícola. Miedo a los patrones abusivos, miedo a la deportación, miedo a perder sus trabajos (e incluso la vida!).

Para más información, ir a www.unitedfarmworkers.com.

PERÚ AL ROJO VIVO

COMPILACIÓN DE NOTICIAS: INDYMEDIA NY.

El presidente Toledo decretó el martes 27 de mayo el estado de emergencia en Perú, tras una serie de huelgas y protestas que convulsionan el país.

Reporte de KLMT, Centro de Media Independiente, Perú/Barcelona: Los docentes, organizados en el sindicato SUTEP, llevaban en huelga dos semanas antes de la declaración del estado de excepción, exigían un aumento salarial de 60 dólares hasta alcanzar un salario mensual medio de 200 dólares, el lunes 26 de mayo los campesinos de diferentes zonas del país también se unieron a la huelga. Como parte de estas protestas, los trabajadores agrícolas organizaron 35 cortes de carreteras en la Autopista Panamericana. El martes 27 de mayo la huelga se extendió a ocho hospitales y a miles de centros de salud, implicando a 35.000 médicos y enfermeras que piden

aumentos salariales. Los trabajadores judiciales también llevan diez días en huelga. El objetivo del estado de excepción es eliminar los bloqueos de carreteras, detener las huelgas en el sector agrícola y reabrir las escuelas. El Secretario de Educación, Gerardo Ayzanoa, inmediatamente declaró ilegal la huelga de profesores.

Lo más interesante es que entre las prioridades de Toledo estaba la protección de "la inversión privada y pública en el país". Declaró que se debían proteger los derechos de la población, incluido el "derecho a trabajar", ignorando por supuesto que con la implantación del estado de excepción ignora uno de los derechos democráticos fundamentales, ¡el derecho a huelga! El estado de excepción significa que el presidente tiene poderes para suspender o limitar la libertad individual. El ejército tendrá el poder para entrar en la casa de cualquier persona y también puede

suspender o limitar el derecho de reunión. Estos, de facto, son poderes dictatoriales. También resulta interesante que el presidente convocara a los empresarios y propietarios de los medios de comunicación (periódicos y canales de televisión) para discutir la situación y qué medidas tomar.

La Jornada, 31 de mayo: Jorge Sánchez, vocero del sindicato del magisterio, que aglutina a unos 280 mil docentes declaró: "Hay una indignación generalizada frente a la incompetencia e incapacidad de este gobierno para resolver problemas por vía del diálogo; se está recurriendo a métodos que son propios de dictaduras". Agregó que los maestros evaluarán el fin de semana en asamblea general levantar o radicalizar la huelga.

Walter Albán, defensor del pueblo, denunció que cuatro personas están desaparecidas en Puno. "Estamos realizando las investigaciones para poder determinar su paradero."

Por otra parte, se reportó que Toledo autorizó el ingreso en el país de 56 marines de Estados Unidos para participar en ejercicios militares conjuntos con fuerzas peruanas en la región selvática amazónica de Iquitos, en la frontera con Colombia, acorde con una autorización previa del Congreso peruano.

BBC, 31 de mayo: Reportó que el legislador izquierdista Javier Díez Canseco denunció que hay 42 estudiantes desaparecidos en Puno desde el jueves.

Tupa Katari / Pablo Indio, Centro de Media Independiente, Argentina, 29 de mayo: Mientras toda la atención está puesta en la

criminal represión que efectuó el ejército contra estudiantes y profesores en Puno, el presidente de Región Lima, Miguel Angel Mufarech denunció por la noche en radio RPP que lo sucedido en Barrancas, al norte de Lima, fue una verdadera masacre. Según sus declaraciones a la prensa, allí se encuentran al menos 18 personas internadas por balas de plomo, hay movimientos extraños en la morgue y el gobierno estaría ocultando la cifra real de muertos. Asimismo leyó los nombres de 8 personas desaparecidas.

Por otro lado en la misma radio dirigentes estudiantiles denunciaron que los asesinados en la represión en Puno son 4, según los relatos que les llegan de los compañeros que estuvieron en el lugar del hecho. Según Canal N, además del estudiante fallecido que reconoce el gobierno -Eddie Jonhy Quilca Cruz, de 23 años-, también falleció Omar Saravia Quispe mientras era sometido a una intervención quirúrgica en el hospital regional Manuel Núñez Butrón de Puno. Por la tarde un funcionario había reconocido que los muertos eran 3 debido a la misma represión.

El gobierno niega todo y sólo reconoce la muerte de Quilca Cruz, mientras amenaza con más represión. Por los medios se justifica la represión en Puno diciendo que las fuerzas represivas se vieron rodeadas por miles de estudiantes y profesores que poseían armas blancas, bombas molotov, etc. El disparate continúa alegando que se escucharon disparos al aire por parte de los civiles así como "consignas terroristas" ligadas a Sendero Luminoso.



EL INDEPENDIENTE

**PARTICIPA
 ENVIA UN EMAIL A:
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